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DAWN

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PTI seeks senator's disqualification over 'defection'

• Saifullah Abro had voted for 27th Amendment, in violation of party line • No action yet against JUI-F Senator Ahmed Khan, who did the same

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Thursday submitted a reference to the Senate chairperson seeking the disqualification of Senator Saifullah Abro for defecting from the party line and voting in favour of the 27th Constitutional Amendment.

PTI Senator Ali Zafar shared the development on his X account, stating: "Saifullah Abro went against the party line by voting in favour of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, for which a reference seeking his disqualification has been filed."

The reference, moved by Senator Zafar, invoked Article 63-A of the Constitution, which deals with disqualification on grounds of defection.

"The declaration is being submitted for onward reference to the chief election commissioner for laying the same before the election commission in accordance with Article 63-A," the reference, dated Jan 1 and seen by *Dawn*, read.

It added that a PTI meeting was convened before the vote on the 27th Amendment, during which it was "explicitly decided and communicated to all PTI senators in writing" that they were to oppose and not vote in favour of any legislative measure or bill relating to the amendment.

The reference further stated that Senator Zafar had also issued written directions to all PTI senators, including Senator Abro, to oppose the amendment. "The record confirms that this direction was properly conveyed to him and that he was fully aware of it," it added.

However, Senator Abro voted in favour of the legislation on Nov 10, 2025, when the Senate first voted on the amendment, and again on Nov 13, 2025, when the House considered it for a second time after certain changes were made, the reference said.

The reference stated that a show-cause notice dated Dec 2, 2025, was issued to Senator Abro and subsequently "received at his residential/official mailing addresses [in] Larkana and Islamabad, affording him full and adequate opportunity to show cause as to why a declaration may not be made against him in terms of Article 63-A".

It added that the show-cause notice was issued in compliance with the requirements of Article 63-A, but no reply or explanation was received from Senator Abro.

By voting against the PTI's direction, Senator Abro "committed a deliberate and wilful breach of party discipline", the reference said.

After considering the facts, the PTI and its parliamentary leadership in the Senate concluded that Senator Abro's conduct was "contrary to the direction issued by the PTI parliamentary party, which constitutes defection from the PTI".

"Senator Saifullah Abro is, therefore, declared to have defected from the PTI in terms of Article 63-A," it said.

The PTI requested the Senate chairperson to refer the declaration to the chief election commissioner "for laying it before the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] for [a] decision in terms of Article 63-A".

"We are sure that the [Senate] chairperson is not going to forward this reference to the ECP. So we are also filing a reference [directly] with the ECP," PTI Senator Aon Abbas Buppi told *Dawn*.

JUI-F senator

Apart from Senator Abro, JUI-F Senator Ahmed Khan also voted in favour of the 27th Amendment against his party line on Nov 10.

Following the vote, the JUI-F expelled Mr Khan from the party.

It said Mr Khan had been asked to resign from his Senate seat and warned that if he failed to do so, it would approach the ECP for his disqualification. When asked about this after Thursday's developments, JUI-F Senator Kamran Murtaza told *Dawn* that the matter was still under consideration.

"The issue is that if we file a reference with the Senate chairperson to de-seat Ahmed Khan from the upper house, there is a strong chance that he will not take up our case and will delay it. This would degrade our party's position," he said.

He added that if the Senate chairman would refer the reference to the ECP, "a seat which is still in our name on paper would go to the PPP or the PML-N". "We do not want to give undue benefit to the PPP or the PML-N this way."
—Iftikhar A. Khan and Kalbe Ali

NATHIA GALI: A recreational area in the hill resort is covered in white after heavy snowfall.—PPI

446 lawmakers fail to submit asset statements to ECP

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Key federal and provincial ministers, along with senior leaders of political parties, are among the 446 lawmakers who failed to submit their statements of assets and liabilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) by the Dec 31 deadline.

However, the defaulters face no immediate threat as under the existing law, only the memberships of those who fail to submit the statements by Jan 15 will be suspended.

Those who failed to meet the legal requirement include 125 members of the National Assembly, 26 senators, 159 members of the Punjab Assembly, 62 of the Sindh Assembly, 48 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, and 26 of the Balochistan Assembly.

The 125 defaulting members of the NA include Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Minister for Power Awais Khan Leghari, Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal, Deputy Speaker Ghulam Mustafa Shah, and Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Chairman Rana Qasim Noon.

Ali Musa Gilani and Abdul Qadir Gilani, sons of former prime minister and incumbent Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani, are also on the list, along with senior PPP leader Syed Khurshid Shah and JUI-F leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri.

Among the 26 senators who failed to submit their statements are Minister for Climate Change Musadik Masood Malik, Benazir Income Support Programme Chairperson Rubina Khalid, ANP chief Aimal Wali Khan, and former ministers Murad Saeed, Abid Sher Ali and Talha Mehmood.

Prominent members of the Punjab Assembly who failed to submit their statements include senior provincial minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Information Minister Azma Bokhari and Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazeer.

From Sindh, those on the list include Provincial Assembly Speaker Awais Qadir Shah, Provincial Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, former provincial assembly speaker and PPP Sindh President Nisar Khuhro, provincial ministers Saeed Ghani, Ali Hasan Zardari, Jam Khan Shoro and Mukesh Kumar Chawla, as well as former chief minister Qaim Ali Shah.

In KP, leader of the opposition in the provincial assembly Ibadullah Khan, provincial ministers Riaz Khan and Faisal Khan, former speaker of the provincial assembly Mushtaq Ghani and former provincial minister Zahir Shah failed to submit their statements.

Defaulters from the Balochistan Assembly include former Senate chairman Sadiq Sanjrani and former deputy speaker of the provincial assembly Rahila Amin Durrani.

ECP sets Jan 15 deadline

Meanwhile, the ECP said in a statement that members of parliament and provincial assemblies were required to submit their statements of assets and liabilities by Dec 31, including details of assets and liabilities of their dependents. It said the submission was mandatory under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017.

The ECP directed lawmakers who have not yet complied to submit their statements by Jan 15.

It warned that members who fail to do so would be suspended the following day, in accordance with Section 137(3) of the Elections Act, 2017, which pertains to the suspension of lawmakers who fail to comply with the deadline.

Nadra pilots ID reprints at e-Sahulat franchises

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) has launched a pilot project allowing citizens to reprint lost and expired Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) through selected e-Sahulat franchises to improve access and reduce congestion at central offices.

The initiative, approved by the Authority Board under the Nadra Ordinance, began operations this week at 18 selected franchise locations in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi.

Nadra officials described the project as an alternative delivery channel for citizens facing travel difficulties or those unable to use the Pak-ID mobile application due to literacy barriers or lack of smartphone access.

E-Sahulat, a network operated by a Nadra subsidiary, maintains over 22,000 franchises typically located at neighbourhood convenience stores.

While these locations traditionally facilitated utility bill payments, more than 9,500 are now equipped with the biometric fingerprint and camera systems required for ID services.

During the pilot phase, a designated Nadra officer will remain present at each location to oversee service quality. Applicants will pay the standard government fee along with a service charge of Rs100 payable to the franchise.

The move is part of a broader strategy to decentralise services, which includes upcoming self-service kiosks at shopping malls, railway stations, and universities.

Subject to a successful evaluation of the pilot, the authority plans to expand the reprinting facility to all 9,500 biometric-enabled franchises nationwide.

PTI leaders return without meeting party founder

MNA says govt could have earned goodwill for talks by allowing visit

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Adiala jail authorities did not allow the PTI leaders to meet their incarcerated chief Imran Khan, as they returned empty-handed after spending several hours outside the prison.

MNA Muhammad Jamal Ahsan Khan Niazi, whose name was in the list of six names shared by the PTI with the jail administration, said they had hoped that the government would allow them to meet Mr Khan as a goodwill gesture.

"It could have been the first step towards creating national harmony and ending the tense political environment, but the government did not avail that chance," he said while talking to *Dawn*.

Jamal Khan said that he arrived outside the jail at 2:30pm and informed the officials that his name was forwarded to the officials by PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja for the meeting.

"The officials told me that they have noted my name and suggested I go back to the check post and wait where the media persons were also waiting. They told me that I will be informed if they get the approval for the meeting. I waited there till 4:40pm, but they kept telling me that they did not get the approval to send me in," he said.

When asked why only two persons reached outside Adiala Jail, although six names were provided to the prison administration, the MNA from Mianwali said that he along with MPA Iqbal Khan Khattak reached the prison together.

"There is a possibility that other leaders might be on the other side of the Adiala jail. I did not have their contact number, so I cannot confirm whether they had arrived or not," he said.

"The government should have allowed the meeting to give an indication that it was serious about the negotiations and the nation would have taken it as a positive message from the government," he added.

On Tuesday, the administration did not allow the family members of Mr Khan to meet him in jail, which led to a sit-in outside the prison. The police, however, used force to disperse the protesters after midnight.

IHC to hear Imran's X post case on Jan 21

• Court directs all respondents to submit replies before the next hearing • Jail superintendent says former prime minister is under strict surveillance and has no access to mobile phones or internet

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed January 21 for hearing a petition seeking the closure of the X (formerly Twitter) account of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan.

The court fixed the hearing for the said date and directed all parties to submit their responses. It noted that the Adiala jail authorities have already filed their reply, while the remaining respondents were asked to submit their responses before the next date of hearing. Salman Akram Raja is representing the PTI founder in the case.

In its written reply, the Adiala jail superintendent categorically denied that PTI founder's X account is being operated from inside the prison. The jail authorities informed the court that Imran Khan is under strict surveillance and has no access to any prohibited device, particularly mobile phones.

The reply stated that mobile signal jammers have been installed inside the jail and in surrounding areas, rendering the use of mobile phones or internet facilities impossible for any inmate. It added that under jail rules, Mr Khan is barred from engaging in political discussions, though some visitors allegedly violate these restrictions by initiating political conversations during meetings.

The superintendent recalled that political instructions previously attributed to the former premier had contributed to social unrest, but insisted that no such communication is now possible as Mr Khan has no access to any mobile or internet-enabled device. He stressed that the X account associated with the PTI founder "is not being operated from the jail" and that its activity "is clearly being managed from outside".

According to the reply, the prisoner is receiving only routine facilities permissible under jail rules or as ordered by the court, none of which include any digital or online communication privileges.

The statement was submitted in response to a petition filed by a citizen, Ghulam Murtaza, through Barrister Zafarullah, alleging that despite being incarcerated, Imran Khan is issuing illegal and provocative messages from his X account.

'FIA quizzes Imran Khan'

In October last year, a detailed statement posted on the PTI founder's official X account claimed that Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials quizzed Imran Khan inside the prison about his alleged "anti-state" tweets, criticism of foreign policy and other matters. Although Mr Khan does not have access to his X account while in jail, the post outlined five key areas of questioning and his responses.

According to the statement, the PTI founder has been repeatedly questioned about his social media activity and has previously refused to answer queries in the absence of his lawyers. The post also alleged psychological torture through solitary confinement and denial of basic prison facilities.

The statement claimed that the first question put to the former prime minister concerned the content of his X account.

It further claimed that FIA officials questioned Mr Khan about his focus on Afghanistan and foreign policy. In response, he blamed the current army chief, alleging that threats to the new Afghan government destabilised the situation. He also criticised the forced expulsion of Afghan refugees and drone strikes, claiming these actions damaged bilateral relations and undermined peace.

Bhir Mound dig yields yet more ancient artefacts

• 6th-century BC lapis lazuli, rare bronze coins bearing image of Emperor Vasudeva recovered
• Findings expand material narrative of ancient Gandhara; link Taxila to trade with Badakhshan

By Amjad Iqbal

TAXILA: Archaeologists excavating the ancient Bhir Mound have unearthed decorative stones dating to the 6th century BC and rare coins from the 2nd century AD, a discovery officials are hailing as the most significant at the site in a decade.

The finds were made during ongoing excavations at the Unesco-listed site, which is regarded as the earliest urban settlement of the extensive Taxila civilisation.

Experts uncovered fragments of metamorphic decorative stone identified as lapis lazuli, alongside the rare bronze coins attributed to the Kushan dynasty, dramatically pushing forward the material narrative of ancient Gandhara.

Aasim Dogar, the deputy director of the Punjab Department of Archaeology who serves as head of the excavation team, confirmed the preliminary analysis of the artefacts.

COINS and decorative lapis lazuli stones, dating back to the 2nd and 6th centuries BC, were unearthed during recent excavations.—Dawn

"The decorative stones are lapis lazuli, a prized semi-precious stone, while the coins belong to the Kushan period," Mr Dogar said.

The excavation team relied on specialised forensic assistance to date the metal artefacts. Mr Dogar noted that detailed numismatic analysis conducted by specialists from the University of Peshawar confirmed that the coins bear the image of Emperor Vasudeva. Vasudeva is recognized by historians as the last of the 'great Kushan rulers' who presided over the region.

According to Mr Dogar, the obverse of the recovered coinage depicts Vasudeva, while the reverse features a female religious deity.

Mr Dogar described this specific imagery as a distinct hallmark of Kushan-era religious pluralism, which often blended various theological traditions.

The artefacts were discovered on the northern side of the archaeological remains, specifically within the B-2 trench — one of 16 distinct trenches currently excavated at the site. Dogar said the surrounding archaeological evidence reveals that these specific remains constituted a residential area.

These latest discoveries affirm that Taxila reached the zenith of its political, cultural, and economic influence under Kushan rule, particularly between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD.

"Under emperors such as Kanishka the Great, Taxila emerged as a major administrative, commercial, and intellectual centre," Mr Dogar said.

Mr Dogar added that widespread Kushan patronage of Buddhism during this era led to the construction of stupas, monasteries, and vast religious complexes.

The period also marked the rise of Gandharan art, a distinctive synthesis of Greek, Roman, Persian, and Indian traditions, with Taxila serving as its core hub.

Malik Tahir Suleman, a renowned numismatist, told *Dawn* that Kushan coins serve as some of the most critical historical sources for understanding ancient South and Central Asia.

"Issued between the 1st and 4th centuries AD, Kushan coins evolved from Indo-Greek imitations into a sophisticated imperial currency system," Mr Suleman said.

"Struck mainly in gold, copper, and bronze, they reflect the empire's economic strength and vast trade networks, including links with Roman markets."

Mr Suleman said Kushan coinage is distinguished by its rich iconography and multilingual inscriptions.

He explained that they often depict rulers in Central Asian attire on one side and a remarkable range of deities — from Helios and Mithra to Shiva, Nana, and the Buddha — on the other.

Beyond the coins, the discovery of the deep-blue lapis lazuli fragments provides vital clues regarding ancient supply chains. Mr Dogar noted that the stone has been valued for millennia across ancient civilisations.

"Its presence at Taxila points to long-distance trade links, particularly with Badakhshan in present-day Afghanistan, a historic source of lapis lazuli," Mr Dogar said.